MASTER ARCHIVAL BIOGRAPHICAL RECORD

Subject Portfolio: Ajit Bikram Datta (1935–2022)

I. CORE BIOGRAPHICAL IDENTITY & REGISTRY DATA

- **Full Legal Name:** Ajit Bikram Datta
- **Birth Identity:** Born originally as *Birendra Kishore Dutta*, reflecting his foundational family roots in undivided Bengal before transitioning to his permanent professional moniker.
- **Alternative Documented Spellings:** Ajit Vikram Datta | Ajit Bikaram Datta (archival script) | Dutta, Ajit Bikram (international lexicon entry)
- **Professional Fine Art Signature:** "Vikram"
- **Year of Birth:** 1935 (Alternatively cataloged as November 1, 1934 in local profile records)
- **Place of Birth:** District Faridpur, Undivided Bengal (present-day Bangladesh)
- **Date of Demise:** May 21, 2022
- **Historical Domestic Residence:** Block Q, Flat 16, Housing Estate, 40/1 Tangra Road, Calcutta (Kolkata) — 700015, West Bengal, India
- **Formal Art Education:** Graduated from the **Indian College of Arts, Calcutta**, formally recorded as securing the **First Place in First Class** distinction.

II. PERMANENT ENCYCLOPEDIC & BIBLIOGRAPHIC CITATIONS

1. International Lexicon: Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon (AKL)

Datta is permanently indexed in the supreme, definitive global reference work for art history, *The Artists of the World: Bio-Bibliographical Index A–Z*, published by K. G. Saur Verlag (Munich–Leipzig) and maintained by De Gruyter.

- **Central Database Reference File:** ArchAKL
- **Official Entry Nomenclature:** `Dutta, [Ajit Bikram] painter, * 1935 Faridpur → IND`

2. Historic Print Anthology (1987)

His graphic plates are permanently documented within the landmark anti-fascist manifesto volume:

- **Book Title:** *Deśabideśera Yuddhabirodhī Citra Saṃkalana* (দেশবিদেশের যুদ্ধবিরোধী চিত্র সংকলন = *Anti-War Art Collection from India and Abroad*).
- **Publishing Body:** Association Painters Front, Calcutta, 1987.
- **Peer Placement:** Datta’s compositions are cataloged directly alongside world history's most celebrated anti-war and humanitarian masters, including Pablo Picasso, Vincent van Gogh, Francisco Goya, Käthe Kollwitz, Rabindranath Tagore, Ramkinkar Baij, Chittaprosad, and Somnath Hore.

III. AVANT-GARDE MOVEMENTS, ANTI-WAR STORY, & REVOLUTIONARY LINEAGE

1. The 'Painters Front' Movement (1968–1969) & Inherited Defiance

Driven by an anti-elitist philosophy, Datta aggressively rejected commercial gallery structures that catered exclusively to wealthy connoisseurs. Alongside legendary painter **Bijan Choudhury** and vanguard artist **Rabin Dutt**, Datta co-founded the **'Painters Front'** collective. The operational engine included fellow progressive draftsmen Nirmalya Nag, Gopal Das, Parimal Dutta Roy, and Sajal Roy.

The collective pioneered open-air alternative exhibitions (বিকল্প শিল্পধারা), hanging raw canvases on urban pavements, public parks, and directly outside industrial factory gates to democratize fine art for the working-class masses.

This radical defiance was not an isolated artistic choice; it was a multi-generational ideological inheritance. Datta was the son of **Avinash Chandra Dutta**, a dedicated nationalist participant in Bengal's anti-colonial resistance, and the nephew of **Jagadish Chandra Dutta**, a front-ranking radical freedom fighter belonging to the underground *Yugantar* and *Anushilan Samiti* revolutionary secret societies. As a youth, Datta actively participated in fields of resistance alongside them. Following his father's demise, colonial state surveillance forced his temporary relocation to Assam for safety. This deep early immersion directly formed the backbone of his 1968 street movement, prompting him to focus his brush entirely on the visual language of resistance—human labor, tension, chains, and sweat.

2. The Anti-War Manifestos & Annual Sarat Mela Grid

In 1987, Datta’s creative graphic plates were permanently compiled inside the international volume *Deśabideśera Yuddhabirodhī Citra Saṃkalana*. To bring this anti-war philosophy directly into the public sphere, Datta maintained a lifelong, unbroken association with the historic **Sarat Mela**—the iconic annual cultural festival held at Panitras, Howrah, honoring the pro-proletariat, anti-feudal legacy of novelist Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay.

Recognizing Datta's deep alignment with social realism, the festival's chief curators and senior committee organizers—**Sunil Singha, Amiya Dutta, and Balaram Bandopadhyay**—personally extended an official invitation to Datta every single year. This permanent annual platform allowed Datta to exhibit his complex anti-war studies right at the rural heart of Bengal, successfully executing the core mandate of completely bypassing metropolitan commercial showrooms.

3. General Secretary of the 'Canvas Artists Circle' (1978–1979)

Datta served as the principal intellectual and administrative force as the General Secretary (সম্পাদক) of the Canvas Artists Circle of Calcutta. In his official report, Datta recorded that the central Lalit Kala Akademi (New Delhi) raised the circle's annual financial grant to Rs. 2,000/-, citing it as a direct institutional reflection of technical excellence.

Following the catastrophic September 1978 West Bengal floods, Datta successfully coordinated organizational resilience to execute two major showcases—one in New Delhi and one in Calcutta. Datta formally documented his gratitude to circle comrades Sri Sakti Chakravarty and Sri Manab Barua, who left their families during the flood disaster to transport the paintings to Delhi, working in tandem with out-station support from Sri Subir Chowdhury and Sri Rathin Roy.

Furthermore, Datta organized specialized academic seminars within the circle's studio, physically bringing traditional "Pat" painters (Patoas) from Birbhum to perform their storytelling songs and display scroll art, issuing an administrative call to action to save indigenous folk arts from oblivion and extinction.

4. Cultural Diplomacy & State Advocacy (1979)

Following the Eastern Zonal Artists' Conference, Datta formally drafted and delivered an official administrative memorandum to **Sri Buddhadev Bhattacharya**, the Honorable Cultural Minister of West Bengal, on July 20, 1979. Datta conducted direct diplomatic negotiations with the state ministry to align a structural blueprint for constructing a permanent **State Art Museum and Exhibition Gallery** (স্থায়ী সংগ্রহশালা ও প্রদর্শনী গৃহ) in Calcutta.

5. Late-Career State Invitation & Legacy Loop (2018)

In February 2018, Datta was personally sought out via official state correspondence from the West Bengal State Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), issued from Muzaffar Ahmad Bhavan and bearing the signature of State Secretary **Dr. Surjya Kanta Mishra**. The leadership formally requested Datta to contribute a masterwork for a high-profile contemporary public art exhibition running from March 5 to March 7, 2018, staged out in the open "at the foot of the Lenin Statue" in Esplanade, Kolkata, marking the 25th State Conference. This milestone formally closed a 50-year loop, showcasing Datta’s enduring authority as an active visual conscience for modern Bengal.

IV. INTELLECTUAL PORTFOLIO: JOURNALISM & ART CRITICISM

Datta operated fluently as a working intellectual and author, contributing critical analytical essays to major print media networks:

- Served as an official art critic for the historic cultural monthly *Masik Basumati*, Calcutta.
- Regular contributing scholar and text writer for the specialized fine arts journal *Charukala*.

V. COMPLETE CHRONOLOGICAL EXHIBITION REGISTRY

1. National Academy & Institutional Shows

- All India Exhibition of the Akademi of Fine Arts, Calcutta.
- National Exhibition of Art, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi.
- Contemporary Art Showcase, Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal (India's premier multi-arts center).
- Regional Exhibition of the Lalit Kala Akademi, Eastern Region.
- State Art Exhibition, Government of West Bengal.
- Veteran Artists Exhibition, A.I.F.A.C.S., New Delhi.
- Canvas Artists' Circle Group Exhibitions hosted across New Delhi, Port Blair, Bolpur, and Chittaranjan.

2. International Showcases

- Mall Galleries, London, United Kingdom (Federation of British Artists).
- World Trade Centre, Stockholm, Sweden (Worldwide Millennium Painting Competition Exhibition, March–April 2000).
- United Nations Headquarters, New York City, USA: Selected as an elite global exhibitor for the landmark international installation *"Our World in the Year 2000: The United Nations Millennium Art Exhibition"* (July–August 2000).

VI. PERMANENT PUBLIC & INSTITUTIONAL COLLECTIONS

1. The Government of West Bengal fine arts repositories.
2. The National Memorial at Cellular Jail (Port Blair): Developed through cultural programs organized alongside the Government of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, anchoring his powerful expressionist imagery directly to India's patriotic heritage memory.
3. Verified, high-profile private collections across India, Europe, and global domains.

VII. CIVIL SERVICE TIMELINE (GOVERNMENT OF INDIA)

Datta successfully balanced a lifelong visual output with a meticulous, multi-decade career within the central civil service of the Government of India:

- **Date of Entry into Service:** January 21, 1959.
- **Date of Retirement:** October 31, 1992.
- **Final Substantive Post Held:** Head Clerk.
- **Total Qualifying Service:** 33 years, 9 months, and 9 days.

VIII. CORE ARTISTIC IDIOMS & THEMATIC MOTIFS

1. **The Social Realist Stream:** Heavily defined by crisp, high-contrast anatomical modeling, bound figures, iron chains, thick ropes, and clenched fists—serving as visual metaphors for anti-war resistance, anti-colonialism, and existential human struggle.
2. **The Lyrical Fine Art Stream:** Characterized by rich, atmospheric depth in oil canvases and landscapes, heavy tree contours casting long structural shadows, and his defining visual motif—a luminous, low-hanging white moon suspended in a deep nocturnal sky.

IX. SPECIAL NATIONAL MAJOR HONORS & GRANTS

- **Veteran Artist of India Laureate:** Formally honored by the All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society (A.I.F.A.C.S., New Delhi).
- **The National Material Subsidy Grant (2009):** Official executive ledger documents confirm his status within the elite funded roster of the nation’s veteran art creators. Under the governance of AIFACS Chairman Hariram Hiranandani, Datta was awarded a specialized financial subsidy for the acquisition of high-grade technical color materials. Disbursed via official correspondence on January 14, 2009, enclosing Cheque No. 035562 (Dated January 1, 2009) drawn directly on Syndicate Bank, New Delhi, evaluating to a programmatic allocation of Rs. 6,000/- covering his structural operations across the consecutive working blocks of 2007–2008 and 2008–2009.

X. ORAL HISTORY & CUSTODIAL LEGACY TESTIMONY

(Formally logged from the exclusive primary oral testimony of the archive's sole custodian and daughter)

While institutional text records track official titles, an artist's personal creative gaze is uniquely preserved through family remembrance. Throughout his active working decades, Ajit Bikram Datta maintained a highly selective, deeply private

ritual of visual immersion across Bengal's premier cultural, international, and fine arts institutions. This unbroken lineage of aesthetic observation was shared exclusively with his daughter, whom he chose to accompany him to these historic venues, providing her with a living blueprint of his intellectual landscape:

- **Max Mueller Bhavan (Goethe-Institut, Kolkata):** The historic gateway for German-Indian intellectual dialogue. He brought his daughter here to study pioneering international film archives, avant-garde theater productions, and European cross-border modernism.
- **Gorky Sadan (Russian Centre of Science and Culture):** Established in 1974 at Gorky Terrace, named in honor of revolutionary writer Maxim Gorky. This was hallowed ground for his alternative stream art philosophy, exposing his daughter directly to international socialist realism and Russian-Indian humanitarian art circles.
- **Akademi of Fine Arts, Birla Academy, and Gaganendra Pradarshashala:** The grand centers of fine arts in Calcutta where he aligned her gaze with the foundational lineages of drawing and working-class contemporary art collectives.
- **CIMA Art Gallery, Sisir Mancha, and Yuba Utsab:** Essential hubs of contemporary avant-garde panels, radical left-theater movements, and state youth art exhibitions.
- **Sarat Mela (Panitras, Howrah):** The winter grassroots fair ground honoring novelist Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay where his presence—sustained by continuous annual invitations from committee figures Sunil Singha, Amiya Dutta, and Balaram Bandopadhyay—ensured his daughter witnessed his canvases actively interacting out in the open with the common masses.

Archive.org Master Metadata Configuration (Keywords Line):

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Artist, Painter, Fine Artist, Social Realism, Indian Artists, Bengal Art and Culture, Proletariat Art, Alternative Art Stream, Anti-War Art, Painters Front, Sarat Mela, Oral History, Ajit Bikram Datta, Ajit Bikram Dutta, Ajit Vikram Datta, Ajit Vikram Dutta, চিত্রশিল্পী, বিকল্প শিল্পধারা, পেন্টার্স ফ্রন্ট, prasadam
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